

**CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE**

**CAMPAIGNING PRIORITIES FOR 2020**

Registered Charity (Number 1174518)

January 2020 [agreed by Board of Trustees on 28 January 2020]

## **CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE: CAMPAIGNING PRIORITIES 2020**

### Introduction

The COPA Board of Trustees discussed in July 2019 the issues of most relevance to the lives of older people in Wales and which of these should be identified as COPAs campaigning priorities for the next year. Following a comprehensive debate, the following were agreed as the top 6 campaigning issues:

- Transport
- Isolation and Loneliness (including Mental Health)
- Social Care (including advocacy)
- Inequalities in Ageing (including Climate Change)
- Housing (including Fuel Poverty)
- Equitable Funding and Support for 50+ Forums/Groups across Wales

Following debate at the COPA Annual General Meeting on 30 October 2019 these were agreed with adjustments – in brackets above.

Whilst these 6 priorities are meant to guide COPA and local 50+ forums and groups in their efforts to represent older people, they are of course not the only issues that are important to older people. The COPA Manifesto for Older People (2019) sets out a range of issues that impact on the lives of older people and require attention. Policy and politics are of course dynamic processes and new issues of concern to older people will emerge at any time. The approach must be sufficiently flexible to react to such changes, both locally and nationally.

The definition of older people can cover people from 50 to 110 or more in age and it is essential that we do not see all older people as one homogeneous group. All people are different and have differing needs that should be addressed taking account of their life course disadvantages, social and economic situation and health conditions. A “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate. COPAs representation of older people therefore will make sure that this range and complexities of circumstances are reflected in our policy discussions and campaigning activities.

**COPAs Campaigning Priorities are set out in more detail in the attached paper.**

COPA Board of Trustees

December 2019

## Cymru Older People's Alliance – Priorities for Campaigning

### Transport

#### COPA Position

Transport is essential to many older people who cannot or no longer drive a car. **An effective, safe, reliable, accessible and integrated transport system is needed across bus and rail services**, especially in rural areas, which allows older people to lead the lives they want to live without restrictions. Community Transport has a vital role to play within a transport system that works well for older people and must be improved and support the role of voluntary drivers. **The Free Bus Pass for over 60s must continue.**

COPA supports the Welsh Government's objective for Accessible and Inclusive Public Transport to develop a 'one stop shop' for the provision of transport planning services so that information should be available to allow passengers to plan their journeys from 'door to door.' **However, any information services should be accessible and not just available "on-line" and must be available in a variety of formats.**

Free Bus Travel for the over 60s and Disabled People has been a successful policy for Wales which has benefitted older people and help address their isolation and loneliness. This should continue but **we oppose the proposed legislation to increase the age of eligibility to Pension Age.**

### Isolation and Loneliness

#### COPA Position

Isolation and Loneliness has an adverse impact on the health and lives of over 75,000 of older people in Wales. The Welsh Government strategy must give **a high priority to tackling isolation and loneliness amongst older people and lead to the funding of practical solutions at a community level.** Access to independent professional advocacy must be guaranteed for vulnerable older people. Community Groups should be supported to help the "hardest to reach" older people in Wales. Lack of Public Toilets leads to isolation for older people with continence problems and any locally agreed Toilet Strategy must be accompanied by resources to make it a reality.

There is a wealth of evidence that demonstrates that loneliness and social isolation are significant issues affecting our older population. Over 50,000 older people in Wales are lonely. Projections show that there will be a 50% increase by 2030 in the number of people over 50 experiencing loneliness. Data from the Cognitive Function and Ageing Study – Wales found that 25.3% of older people (aged 65 and over) in Wales reported being lonely and 26.9% socially isolated. Loneliness can be twice as unhealthy as obesity or the same as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

**Cymru Older People's Alliance believe that isolation and loneliness is a major issue for older people in Wales which needs urgent attention.** This should include:

- Support and funding could be provided for inter-generational activities between old and young in an organised and structured programme.
- The impact of isolation and loneliness for older men living alone and its consequences for pressures on social services, housing etc should not be ignored.
- Over 40% of people over 75 do not have or use a computer. Inclusion of Older People of all ages through IT learning and support and access to services and help “face to face” not just “on line” will help combat loneliness.
- Tackling isolation and loneliness must include help through GPs and community health services and include better resources and support for Mental Health.
- Loneliness for those in care homes and living with dementia should be addressed through specialist approaches that recognise the complexities involved in these situations.
- COPA should develop a Position Paper on Climate Change which will demonstrate that older people are just as concerned about this issue as others.

## Health and Social Care

### COPA Position

Care Homes and Domiciliary Care services provide vital support to over 60,000 vulnerable older people in Wales and must be given greater support and funding to be efficient and cost effective and **provide high quality person-centred care and support to older people at all times**. Councils must support older people to live independently at home for as long as possible. Early intervention and prevention must be available consistently across Wales. Quality responses must be made by councils to meet their legal duties and deliver **a wide range of relevant community services and activities in their local area. This includes access to independent professional advocacy where an individual does not have family or friends to help them.**

In respect of Paying for Care, **absolute clarity is needed to enable people to plan effectively for their long-term care**. There is a **tangible injustice in the care system for people with dementia**. We want this issue to be dealt with urgency – older people do not have time to wait any longer. Self-funders in care homes are cross subsidising council funded residents and this must be addressed. Top Up fees are sometimes being paid or families put under pressure to pay - when they should not be and this practice must be brought into line with the statutory requirements. **We want robust and radical change to the Paying for Care arrangements so that they are based on key principles of equity and fairness – whatever financial model is utilised.**

Older People are by far the largest users of the NHS but should not be “blamed” for rising costs – there are other costs which have risen more significantly. **Older people must always be treated with dignity and respect during a hospital stay or out-patients appointment and discharged from hospital in an effective and**

**timely manner.** They should not be wrongly labelled as “bed blockers” which is insulting. Arrangements for Older people making an appointment to see a GP should be more responsive to their individual needs and circumstances especially those living with sensory loss, dementia or a cognitive impairment, as well as their carers.

### Inequalities in Ageing

#### COPA Position

Human Rights of Older People in Wales is a key priority. It is essential that a rights-based approach is embedded across public services for disadvantaged groups including older people in Wales through **robust new legislation that is at least the equivalent of the Children’s Measure** and its supporting Regulations. Meaningful action must be taken to ensure that the rights of older people across Wales are upheld, particularly for those who may be vulnerable or need care and support. This must include raising awareness both amongst the public and staff who look after older people. **Abuse of Older People in all its forms must be addressed.** We want to see an end to ageism and age discrimination wherever it occurs through a national campaign. **We pledge our support for the Commissioner for Older People’s campaign to end ageism and age discrimination.**

We want to see the **creation of Age Friendly Communities across Wales** which recognise and celebrate diversity, brings people together to challenge ageism and ensure that all ages can fully participate in community life. This should take account of the need to develop Dementia Friendly Communities and meet the World Health Organisation 8 Domains for age-friendly communities. This concept should be developed and supported by Councils and Health Boards in Wales. **The Ageing Well in Wales programme should be given full support** to further develop and reach its potential to ensure an active old age for all older people in Wales.

Inequalities in ageing persist despite the progress made in Wales to improve the lives of older people. Inequalities in ageing exist in relation to income, housing, access to health and social care, poverty in later life, mental health and well-being, employment, domestic abuse, paying for care with dementia, for older women, access to and skills to use technology. The healthy life expectancy of people in affluent and deprived communities differs by 19 years and this is unacceptable. **A life-course and rights-based approach to policy and practice to address these issues is needed.**

We all live in a very ageist society where most older people do not know their rights so legislation is needed as well as practical measures to raise awareness. Legislation for Vulnerable Groups is proposed by Welsh Government but it is essential that it caters for older people’s needs and **takes implementation of the UN Principles of the Older Person beyond health and social care** into all aspects of interest to older people in Wales.

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**We want Age Friendly Communities (AFCs) to be recognised as an essential starting point to ensuring that the civil and human rights of older people can be upheld** in communities and through the services older people rely on to maintain their independence. On a basis of co-production, we want to see organisations in the

age sector to work together in developing a meaningful AFC development programme to make change happen through a collaboration not competitive approach. COPA will continue to show its commitment to the creation of AFCs and through its Trustees and Voting Members will support development work through attendance at meetings, commenting on papers and evaluating progress through contact with local forums.

## Housing to meet needs of Ageing Society

### COPA Position

Housing should be fit for all older people whatever their circumstances. The recommendations in the **Expert Group Report on Housing for an Ageing Population in Wales must be effectively implemented as well as expansion of "Help to Stay, Help to Move" services and aids and adaptations schemes**. We want to see introduction of more viable and innovative accommodation options for older people as they age. More Extra Care schemes should be available in all areas of Wales.

The Expert Group on Housing for an Ageing Population in Wales (2017) set out a number of priorities for action **which are still relevant and which COPA supports**:

- . A better understanding of the housing preferences and choices of older people through integrated assessment;
- Different stakeholders need to stimulate the market, creating demand with innovative solutions and providing choice for older people;
- Closer partnership working between Housing, Health, Social Care and the third sector is needed;
- Individuals need to plan for their housing requirements in later life;
- Designers should recognise older people in what they design;
- Planning should prioritise older people;
- Increased investment and financial incentives are important to stimulate the market and enable creative solutions across all tenures to be adopted, to build new homes and improve existing housing for older people;
- Access to information, support and advice is crucial. People need information to help them make the right housing choices at the right time and in the right way;
- Technology, community equipment, aids and adaptations can transform the way people live – enabling people to live independent and fulfilling lives for longer. We need to find ways of identifying these opportunities and be open to innovation.

Fuel Poverty and its impacts on older people in Wales must also be addressed

COPA, December 2019